arms. It is true that all this work which the Indian women must perform is made more tolerable by the fact that they are very strong and robust. Proof of this robustness is what they do as soon as they give birth: going to the river or stream with their newborn child they go into the water and swim about and wash themselves thoroughly, and do not experience the least harm as a result. However, should the husband capture a woman from some Indian nation or from among the Spaniards, her life is spared so that she may serve his wife as a slave, and him as a concubine—but he must be secretive in his relationships with the captured woman for the wives are extraordinarily jealous and will make things difficult for the husband should he make advances towards a Spanish woman. . . .

"Smallpox is a great scourge to these nations, and makes terrible inroads into them because they have no doctors other than the old fakers, and if the latter do not cure the sick person, and they usually don't, then all will abandon him to his fate. When anyone dies, those who happen to be present open up a grave for him on the very spot, bury him stretched full-length, stick a spear into the ground over his resting place and hang a Christian's or some other enemy's skull on the shaft's end; then they desert the place and never return to it while memory of it lasts. Not even a trace of religion has been found among them, rather are they perfect athiests without the least knowledge about the afterlife or the immortality of the soul. They have a certain respect for their female witchdoctors, more out of fear of what they may do to them than from any good they may hope to receive from them. These witchdoctors try to make the others believe that they hold in their hands the power to heal or to make sick, and these are the ones who resist the Gospel most vigorously, using their influence to keep their followers from receiving Holy Baptism or allowing their children to receive it, and persuading them that baptism will kill them. To this end, to bolster their arguments, they take advantage of what happens in any mission post when the missionaries only baptize those who are about to die, and as the Indians then usually see such a person die, the noxious error becomes more firmly rooted in their untutored minds." "Descripción del Chaco" [Chorographic Description of the Chaco] page 82.

This account by the Missionary Fathers is confirmed by what has been observed by travelers who have visited these same Indians in more modern times, even in the present day. [579]

881 hovel as was performed for the ripening of the algarroba."

"Marriages have no special ritual of any importance. They
582 do not marry close consanguineous relatives but do so with in-laws. Although they usually marry another member of their own nation, they are not forbidden to marry those of another, especially of the Toba nation. Parental authority has no say whatever in the childrens' marriages, and these latter marry as they wish to, when they wish to and whom they wish. The woman requires the groom to be a good fisherman and he that the bride not be too much of a homebody but be willing to wander about the countryside in search of food."

"The marriage being done in secret, the couple go off to the
585 591 forest for five or six days. On returning to the village they live openly in the hut which they choose to occupy, although the normal thing is for the bride to go to live in the hut of her parents-in-law."

"Polygamy is very rare and it is most uncommon to come
595 586 across a man having two wives simultaneously. However they do not recognize conjugal indisolubility and the younger persons quite frequently divorce each other. This is not so apt to happen among older men, although a whim is often enough to bring a divorce about.
[684] Adultery is considered a crime and is not very common. The wife of the man involved will invariably avenge herself upon the adultress, going to her hut publicly, shouting at her wildly and disfiguring her by giving her a sound beating with a stick in the presence of the whole village which congregates to jeer.

"When pregnant the woman is not given the least considera-
843 846 tion. After bearing her child she lies on the sand for a few days while her husband abstains from fishing and from all other activities." [595]

"The mothers are very loving in bringing up their children.
854 While they are little they seldom part from them, and amidst the burdensome domestic chores and daily foraging trips into the country-
[482] side they carry their babies about with them in a wide transverse swathe. When the children are a little bigger they carry them on one
[553] or other of their shoulders. When they are two or three years old they are given names."

"Abortion is very frequent, particularly among the unmarried
647 women, and it is brought on by their striking their abdomens or by having some other person strike them. Infanticide is rare but it happens now and then that a very small suckling child is put to death so that, buried at its dead mother's side, it may receive milk from her."

776 idea of a large and supreme being, which in their language they call ohott-at (others pronounce it hojot-taj) which means 'great spirit,' but they do not worship it. Some of them appear to fear a sort of ghost which goes about at night and harms people and which they call onnexilele; others seem to indulge in a certain superstitious worship of a mysterious being which they call taj-juat, which means 'hidden one,' but without temple or particular place or determined time to render it their adoration. I only know that at the time of the new 791 moon, some of the Indians commonly get together to sing and dance, 776 and the sorcerers, as they call them, trick them by getting someone to dress up and play the part of taj-juat who, appearing out of the forest strangely garbed and speaking in a feigned tone of voice, frightens the spectators, to whom he predicts future times and events."

881 "But if the Matacos can be said to have no religion, this does not mean that they have no superstitious beliefs. For example, when a girl reaches puberty, she must remain withdrawn for a [604] certain time in a corner of her hut, covered with branches or any other thing, and neither speak to anyone nor eat meat or fish. And while she is thus withdrawn and cut off from the others, one of the village's ceremony masters must be in front of the hut playing the pimpin. When a ● 846 woman gives birth to a child she must remain lying down for a few days, and the husband must refrain from doing any work or indulging in any occupation for a long time. On occasion a woman has been surprised dancing round a bonfire into which she had thrown her dead child."

756 "Sorcerers also are not lacking among them, these, of course, being the most cunning, and the most feared and respected members of the community, who also play the part of medicasters and priests. In order to be accepted as one of those who follow so important and useful a profession it is enough if one wants to and feels strongly inspired; but first it is necessary that the candidate separate himself for a few days from the rest of the people and go off into the forest, fasting rigorously and going about day and night like a madman in no particular direction, returning then and appearing before the others pale, dirty, emaciated and with frightened eyes like one possessed. From that time on he is recognized as a privileged being who has had secret dealings with "the hidden one" and is possessed of a supernatural power which [753] enables him to undo any evil bewitchment and eliminate diseases from the sick, it being axiomatic amongst them that nobody sickens or dies from purely natural causes.

generals, that is the ones who have several camps under their command, have at least one wife in each camp. C 622

Two or three days after delivery, mother and child wash, the new mother resting for only that length of time. C M 846

The father acknowledges his child and takes it into his arms with the following words: "This is my child." In some tribes it is customary for the husband to take to his bed when his wife is in labor, as an act of acknowledgement; and among the Chiriguanos the man takes his place beside his wife and for three days is cared for as if he had... given birth to a child! Then he gets up, but does not make any trips or work until seven days have elapsed, after which period the wife also gets up and washes. While the couple is in labor they eat nothing but water and a pap made with corn and bean broth; they abstain from eating meat.

It is quite common for a man to have two or more sisters simultaneously as wives. I can also give assurance that every now and then a father will not disdain even his own daughter. If no one will acknowledge a child as his own the mother may kill it. M 595 [588] [847]

The Indians are very skilled midwives: the white settlers themselves use their services. It is said that they are extraordinarily expert in taking advantage of the precise moment of crisis, holding the patient in a more or less straight position, apparently even shaking her, but without doing her harm. To this activity they add words to which the Indians attribute [185] virtue and to which the whites, who do not understand them, ascribe even more. So is it always! M 844

Let it not be thought, however, that in the matter of love-making they limit their efforts to a more or less expressive pantomime. The fact is that they have words and expressions and a language which lend themselves admirably to amorous declarations and which they use. The harmoniousness of the Guaraní language is well known to all, it might even be said that it is too much so when used by the men and by the Chiriguanos, whose mother tongue it also is. But even the Matacos, the rude, unpolished Matacos who seem to be the last on the anthropological scale of all these South American Indians, have their harmonious expressions and the well-bred ideas which correspond to them. C M 832

I remember an occasion on board ship when there was among us a good looking Indian woman who was quiet, impassive and even M 832

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Choroti SK6

M 844 C 844

ease, without suffering much pain. From the point of view of the savage it is of special importance that this should be so. As the *Choroti* explained the matter to me: if at the birth the woman is ill, this is due to her being possessed by an evil spirit, and the demon, owing to the close connection between mother and child, will also take possession of the latter causing it to fall ill and die. Hence the weakness and sickness from which possibly she is suffering must be concealed and reasoned away. The Choroti have a stereotyped phrase to express this: *lasihe ise lóuet = lahse ihe, eis lóuet*, that is: »when the child is born, the mother is well». As a matter of fact, a few hours after the delivery the Choroti woman is seen to move about doing some small tasks in the house, fetching water, preparing food, and so on. In short, she acts as if she were quite hearty, thus deceiving herself, her relatives, and the evil spirits. But the curious thing is that among the Choroti the *father* of the child, seemingly instead of the mother, lies in bed, looks weak, fasts, and is attended by the women, in short, behaves just as if he were the person who had given birth to the child and were suffering pains. The precaution which the woman shares with her husband, in addition to abstaining from hard work, is that she has to diet. Like him she avoids meat, limiting her diet to boiled and mashed maize, the leaves of certain trees and certain other vegetables.

C 846

This is the custom generally known under the name of *la couvade* (»hatching») and which among the Choroti exists in its most typical form. The father remains lying in bed for five or six days, or *until the navel-wound of the child is perfectly healed*. The reason for this is quite obvious and was, besides, expressly pointed out to me by the Indians. The navel-wound may become a dangerous source of infection, and the new-born child is in its most delicate condition during the first days or until the navel-wound is healed.

M 846 171

Before I give further explanations of the ideas underlying the couvade practices I shall say a few words about the birth customs of the Mataco and the Tobas. These tribes do not practice couvade in the proper sense of the word, but they have the same ideas about an intimate connection existing between the new-born child and both parents.

M 846

What I have stated as to the birth customs of the Choroti also holds true of those of the *Mataco*, with the exception that the Mataco father does not actually lie in bed. He has nevertheless to take certain precautions, and the fact that he pretends to be in a delicate condition during the first critical days of his child's life is shown by the expression the Mataco use of him. He is said to have an *aíttah limpáh*, that is to say.

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M 846 »to be a little sick», which means that he has to be cautious with regard to his work and his diet, just like his wife. Any heavy work, hunting, fishing, the touching of iron instruments, is prohibited to the father, since otherwise his delicate son might fall ill and die. Fasting is likewise obligatory for both of them. The Mataco say of both parents: *uenhitātāk, yil vuh. i.e.*, »they do not eat, there are many demons of death» (moving about and threatening especially the child, but also the parents themselves). A light vegetable food, mainly consisting of boiled and mashed maize, is prescribed for both of them.

When the confined woman has been delivered, her ventral parts must be well covered to protect her against evil spirits which might do her harm. In the evening drums are beaten to keep off the same supernatural, malicious powers. If the woman is the wife of a great chief, a special dance is performed which the Mataco call *Katináh* and which takes place at great feasts celebrated by the whole village community. Like all other dances of the Mataco, the *Katináh* is in its character ceremonial or a sort of conjuration by which evil spirits are kept off or made harmless.

M [622 535]

T 846 622 Among the *Tobas*, just as in part among the Mataco, the ceremonies which are performed and the precautions taken are more elaborate when the mother is the wife of a great chief. Even some time before birth takes place the woman, as we have already seen, has to observe certain rules in regard to her diet, abstaining particularly from eating fish. As soon as the woman has been delivered her body must be well covered, for otherwise, I was told, the evil spirits may enter into her and kill both her and her new-born babe. The danger is particularly great at night. Therefore the Indians assemble in great numbers outside the chief's house, chanting the whole night, accompanying themselves with their rattle-gourds and drinking great quantities of algaroba beer. In the day the young men perform the dance *Nomí*. During the first days the woman does not leave the house, and although she is not ill she remains completely inactive. She likewise continues to fast, eating neither fish nor meat and living solely on maize and certain leaves. — The above ceremonies are performed, and the rules of diet are observed, during five days, or until the navel-wound of the child is completely healed.

T 846 Much the same ceremonies are performed when the mother is a woman of ordinary rank, with the exception that the father of the new-born child alone chants to his rattle the first evening after the birth; and the dance *Nomí* does not take place. The happy event is always celebrated by an algaroba drinking-bout. The mother does not stay in bed and

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does not seem to be ill, but she abstains from any work during the five critical days and goes on dieting, particularly avoiding fish.

All these customs are based upon the belief that, at the moment of birth and during the first days afterwards, both the new-born child and the mother are particularly exposed to the attacks of the evil spirits, called *peyák*. These demons are believed to arrive in great numbers in the form of snakes — a special kind of snake existing in the country of the Tobas — but invisible, and with every breath of wind try to enter the house and penetrate into the woman with the consequence that, if they succeed in doing so, both the mother and the child will fall ill and die. The chanting and the shaking of the rattles at night and the dancing in the day-time, just as the precaution to cover the woman, have for their object the protection of the mother and child and to keep off the evil spirits. Similarly, the drinking of algaroba beer is on this occasion of a ceremonial character, as we shall see later on.

Not only the mother, however, but also the father of the child has to observe certain precautionary rules especially in regard to his diet. The custom of »couvade», at any rate nowadays, only exists among the Tobas in a modified form. According to what the Indians themselves told me they formerly practised this custom almost as strictly as the Choroti do still, the father being obliged to lie inactive in his bed for many days, strictly fasting. In our days the Toba father does not observe a real couvade, in so far as he does not keep to his bed. He merely abstains from doing hard work and avoids certain kinds of food, because they are believed in some way to influence unfavourably the health of his new-born child. Thus for instance, if he eats the head of a cow his little son will soon die. Similarly he must be cautious in eating fish. His principal food during the critical days consists of maize and certain fruits. These rules are observed for about one week. That the first days are considered so critical, is due to ideas which we already found among the Choroti and Mataco. When among the Tobas I asked the father of a new-born child how long he had to keep the rules of couvade, he pointed to the navel of his son, meaning to say that as soon as the navel was all right the danger was passed. It is believed that evil spirits might enter into the child by the navel-wound and kill it.

In my work *The Civilization of the South American Indians* I have tried to describe the ideas underlying the custom of couvade, which in South America is practised by most tribes in one form or another. Whilst referring the reader to this work for further details, I shall here only add

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846 a few words to explain the custom with particular reference to the Chaco Indians. The primitive idea that a new-born child is especially exposed to supernatural dangers is not difficult to understand; like most savage customs it has an underlying stratum of reality. The child is naturally at the beginning of its existence in a delicate state, and as a matter of fact, the mortality among new-born children is terribly great in the Chaco as in other parts of South America where the natives live in a state of nature. The Indian from his standpoint cannot fail to ascribe such facts to supernatural causes, and therefore the ceremonies at birth assume to a great extent a magical or religious character, conjurations and similar rites playing a prominent rôle in them.

As I have already pointed out, the couvade practices are essentially founded on the idea that between the new-born child and both parents there exists an intimate connection so that everything that happens to the parents is also supposed to happen to the child. Now as far as the mother is concerned, it is not difficult to understand why primitive peoples have arrived at the belief in such an intimate connection between her and her new-born babe. Being keen observers they have undoubtedly noticed that while the mother suckles her child, her own physical and
M mental condition is to a certain degree reflected in her delicate offspring.
842 More enigmatical appears at first sight the firm conviction of the Indian as to a still more intimate connection or sympathy uniting the *father* with his new-born child. This curious idea is explained by the peculiar theory of conception which is held by the Indians. The primitive Indian does not know that the germ of the new being is in fact in the woman herself and that the man only fecundates it at the sexual act. He evidently believes that the seed springs from the man and that the rôle of the woman is limited to receiving and developing it during pregnancy, just as the earth receives the seeds planted into it and in due time brings forth the full-grown fruit. This is the idea which Professor von den Steinen found among the Xingu tribes, who regard the *man* as the bearer of the eggs, and consequently afterwards could identify the father and his new-born son, calling the child »the little father». This idea is evidently general in South America, for instance in the Gran Chaco, and explains why the Indians consider the relationship existing between the father and his new-
T born son still closer than that existing between the child and its mother.
842 There are indeed customs which so strongly emphasize the father's
847 share in the generation of offspring, that the latter appears to be almost wholly of the flesh and blood of its father. Thus among the Tobas there

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prevails the custom that a man simply kills the child of his married daughter if his son-in-law has incurred his displeasure; and all Chaco women kill their new-born babes if they have been abandoned by their husbands and, in general, when the father is unknown. Similarly an Indian woman as a rule kills the child she bears to a white man directly after it is born, if not before. Such customs no doubt assume the recognition of a very intimate relationship between the child and its father. The child is part

Young Toba Indian outside his house. Bolivian Chaco.

and parcel of the father, or rather, *is* the father. Hence, if the woman is displeased with her husband and has broken all relations with him, she destroys the child she has born him.

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According to the idea of the Indians the father with his new-born child forms as it were one single personality, and everything which happens to the father during the critical days is supposed to affect his little son directly. The rules which the former has to observe concern first of all the food. If the father eats some unsuitable food, this — as the Indians told me — would be just the same as if his delicate son ate the same food and the consequences would prove fatal to the latter. The situation remains critical as long as the navel-wound is not perfectly healed. If, at birth, complications of any kind ensue with the new-born child or with

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the mother, these are at once set down as the operation of evil spirits. The parents, especially the father, are released from the restriction laid upon them by custom as soon as the child is assumed to have become independent of the physical and mental constitution of its parents.

Among the Chaco Indians, there does not exist any ceremonies corresponding to our baptism, but a *name* is always given the new-born child. The Chaco Indians name their children after animals, birds, reptiles (for instance Bird, Alligator, Lizard), or after bodily peculiarities observed in the child (for instance: Tsĭhnilak, »Paunchy», a Choroti name), but the names seem on the whole to be given at random and not with the same discrimination which is the rule among some Indians of tropical South America. There is however one peculiar feature to be noted in this respect: the reluctance generally displayed by the Indians to mention their real names. I very rarely heard the Indians using each other's names in their daily conversations, and if one wished to find out the name of a certain Indian, this was as a rule extremely difficult. When a Choroti, a Mataco, or a Toba went to the settlements of the whites to work, he usually assumed a special European name for that time. Such names they never had any objection to mentioning, but they were extremely unwilling to tell me their proper native names. Only on certain occasions — for instance, at the drinking-feasts when all were in high spirits and very good friends — did it happen that the Indians told me one another's names. The native name, received in early childhood, is the real name and is to a certain degree taboo. To reveal it is a perilous thing, especially if the individual *himself* does it. It is to put oneself wholly in the power of an unknown stranger and wilfully to expose oneself to mysterious dangers.

As we shall find later on, the names of the *dead* are particularly taboo.

845 766 A child born dead is buried immediately without any ceremony. It is considered as waste matter just as is the placenta. On the other hand, if the child dies after having lived for a few hours it is buried according to the traditional funeral rites.

846 262 After the birth of their child both father and mother continue to take various precautions of a magical nature in order not to undermine the child's health. They abstain from certain foods, among others, from the flesh of the tatú [type of armadillo--Translator] and of the iguana All infractions of food "tabus" will cause the child to have stomach trouble. Certain "tabus" last from one to two years. 834 The husband abstains from all sexual intercourse with his wife until such time as the baby has teeth.

856 Some practices have, in the Indians' opinion, the magical power of influencing the child's growth. Thus, the parents may ask a woman who has beautiful hair to cut off a lock and rub their little daughter's head with it. A person whose limbs are very well shaped will be asked to massage the legs of a child In general, parents are pleased when well formed persons take their baby in arms to communicate their good looks.

852 A woman will feed only her own child and refuses to breast feed any other baby. Nevertheless one can see, on occasion, grandmothers giving the breast to a baby, but this is only to [11] pacify them and not to nourish them as some assert When the child is about a year old, his mother chews up grains of boiled corn and introduces [862] this paste, with her fingers, into the little one's mouth. In order to pacify their babies, whom my presence frightened, the mothers would keep feeding them continually. Likewise when a child would make a fuss in church, its mother would start by patting it gently and saying "hush," "hush," "hush" to it in order to calm it down, but if this measure did not bring about the necessary effect she would put it to breast.

855 I do not remember ever seeing a man or a woman mistreat a child. The following episode, which I observed in a Mataco village, may be considered typical. A little child about two years old was screaming madly without apparent cause. His mother jumped him up and down on her knees in the hope of pacifying him; then she closed his mouth with her hand. As the little fellow continued to scream